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ABSTRACT

The author states that art and the aesthetic have historically become inseparable. For art education this raises the question: is the role of art in education functioning in the same capacity as art in society? It is conceivable that overreliance on past orientation, or even that any reference whatever to that limited vision of the art-aesthetic, has significantly diminished our capacity to comprehend the real-aesthetic of human experience. The aesthetic side of man is essentially an experience of encounter with the world of discovery, and ultimately of self-awareness. This encounter is initially funded through all the senses which is a complex multidimensional compendium of phenomena. The author, however, attempts to explicate a partial taxonomy to account for the sensuous. The aesthetic becomes the media of art where through sensation and conceptualizing, one is able to synthesize a perception which has a self-referent. In the information processing culture, the aesthetic will be the knowing, interactionary relationship between ourselves and our cybernetic environment. It is proposed that the new aesthetics be pursued as the humanistic ways of knowing, wherein multiple aesthetic modes are viewed as parts of the whole human phenomenon. This synaesthesia is the activity of coming to the self's real-actualization and knowing of the future culture, as well as an awareness of existence within the space-time continuum. (Author/SBE).
It is hoped that by critically evaluating these plans and how they have oper

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AESTHETIC EDUCATION AND THE THIRD DOMAIN: SYNAESTHETICS

A research report presented at the
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AESTHETIC EDUCATION AND THE THIRD DOMAIN: SYNAESTHETICS

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Until humanity starts behaving
In logical ways
For logical reasons
Natural evolution will force it
To keep on behaving logically
For seemingly illogical reasons--
Resulting inexorably, as at present,
In humanity's backing
Rump-bumpingly into its future....R.Buckminster Fuller

Within the dominion of the arts we are recurringly confronted with what is probably one of the most confusing--if not the most difficult to understand--of ideas. This is the aesthetic. The notion of the aesthetic has confounded our relationship to the arts. Or, it has contributed immeasurably to the fullness, the richness and the significance of our understanding of the arts. It has been extrinsically objectified as a quantifiable component of the art. And it has been attended to as an intrinsic aspect of the subjective relationship of the art-form to the human experience. Historically, the aesthetic seems to have been a fugitive from consensus.

Depending on the referent chosen, the elusive aesthetic has been referred to as the standards of value in judging art or as the "immediately sensuous

aspect of human experience" or as the preference for certain arbitrary forms. The role the aesthetic has been cast in has varied in recent history, yet the overwhelming emphasis of its relation to the arts cannot be denied. When we speak of the arts in theoretical or philosophical or historical terms, the aesthetic is at least tacitly taken into consideration.[1]

The aesthetic in art has been identified with the sensuous aspects of human experience, as contrasted with the logical aspects of cognitive knowledge. The aim of the sensuous was beauty, while the logical objective was truth.[2] The judging of an art in terms of an "aesthetic judgment" was a way of knowing art, arising from the harmony of enjoyment (beauty) and natural purposiveness, of the congruity of an object of cognition with the forms of knowledge. This is essentially the Kantian transcendental aesthetic.[3] The aesthetic, by contrast to the previous attitudes, has also been the subject of empirical investigation. The art has been studied from the point of view of its components or forms of structure such as shape, line, color, and their combinations. The response to the aesthetic was really an attempt to define it by searching out the preferences exhib-

ited toward the elements of art.[4] All of the aforementioned criteria of the aesthetic were posited between the mid-eighteenth and the mid-nineteenth centuries (and chronologically in the order given).[5]

Embodied in these means of attempting to realize the aesthetic, there are also a number of conceptions as to what is the nature of art. In other words, the aesthetic leads us to art. It is conceivable also, to interchangeably state that the art is the vehicle into the aesthetic. Thus, art and the aesthetic somehow become--or have historically become--inseparable and the one is needed for the other: art for aesthetic's sake or aesthetics for art's sake. This may appear as a tautology, but is seemingly one to which we have become victim. One cannot be privileged to the aesthetic without some recourse to art (other than by accident) and art is not art unless there is access to the province of the aesthetic. The essence and the entity, one tone in the tenor of the nature of things.

While we may purposively attempt to discover the concept of the aesthetic in art, or vice versa, it cannot be assumed that the essence of the total dimension attributable to the aesthetic need be confined to the aesthetic-art/art-aesthetic circle.

More often than not, however, this singular attachment of the aesthetic and the art, umbilically bound, "and more inexorable far / Than empty tigers or the roaring sea" is what continues to be sought after, and which is pervasive in much of the current art's discourse.

One can find variations on these attributes of the aesthetic dimension being reiterated, revised, espoused and researched currently within our discipline of art education. Aesthetic preferences or at least preferences for certain kinds of visual stimuli and modes of visual attending are considered viable sources for research and study. In early childhood art education there is an emphasis on the experience of art and the expression of experiences through art. And a considerable amount of literature is devoted to the issue of judgments, particularly criticism, as it relates to the evaluation of art for the classroom teacher.

Here we have visible the outgrowth of an historically funded continuum. A concept of art that is based upon an existing art-form, a previously established art-form. Concurrent with this is the art-aesthetic which is or has been related to the established art-form, a form which is seemingly acceptable

by consensus. What seems to transpire out of this existing art-form and art-aesthetic interrelationship is a view of art for the present which is past oriented. For art education this raises the question: Is the role of art in education functioning in the same capacity as art in society? It is conceivable that an overreliance on past orientation, or even that any reference whatever to that limited vision of the art-aesthetic, has significantly diminished our capacity to comprehend the real-aesthetic of human experience. If, what we currently refer to as aesthetic education is to have a substantial contributing role in present education, then the time may be upon us to begin reassessing the aesthetic in terms of the human dimension, instead of perpetuating the rather singular attitude of the art-aesthetic and its subsequent situation bound context.

The Austrian lyric poet Rilke has said that "With all his eyes the creature world beholds the open. But our eyes, as though reversed encircle it on every side, like traps set around its unobstructed path to freedom." Having this capacity to see our world and ourselves as a part of it is the potential of man, The ever increasing knowledge and awareness is

"essentially the reflection of a light which is kindled from within in the self and not from external sources."[6] Our inability to cope with the advances which are transpiring outside of our immediate self has come about because we have "failed to keep touch with the aesthetic side of man."[7]

This aesthetic side of man, if it is to be actualized within the self requires that it be attended to by the organism. This is essentially an experience of encounter, of discovery and ultimately of self-awareness. The encounter is that process of active contact which the living organism makes with its world. It is a seeking out, a selecting "and beyond it all, invading and carving out for itself" a place in the world in which it lives and makes its contacts.[8]

The encounter is a "decisive inner experience," an experience which reveals new dimensions of the self. It is not revealed as intellectual knowledge "but as integral awareness."[9]

This encounter is initially funded through the senses. We are literally immersed in a "sea of sensibilia." Our encounter with the sensuous is constantly in a state of coming to arousal, of being aroused, and of the diminishing traces of arousal.

It is a complex compendium of phenomena which is multi-dimensional. The exigency of sensory input is decidedly complex. It is possible, however, to explicate a partial taxonomy of sorts.

To begin, there are five basic senses. The visual aesthetic minimally involves at least two of these five senses. There are more than five sense apperceptors: there are "the thermal sense, the sense of balance, sense of air pressure, sensitivity to light . . . sense of blood pressure, heart beat, equilibrium, nausia, vertigo, etc." There is the ambiguous sense of feeling, whether it is the recognition of sense data or a state of moods. It may be an emotion felt. It can possibly be desires and passions in the sensuous aspects or the erotic and sexual, the sensual. There are pleasures, pains, delighting, enjoying, repulsion and disgust, excitement, fear and fright. There is the sense experience of time and duration, of the temporal and atemporal.[10] In all these is the awareness of the forces and energies which are internal to or which are brought to bear on our bodysphere, the realm of being.

According to Gardner Murphy the organism does not passively await sensory stimulation. It seeks out and selects sensory stimulation according to

processes which are in rhythm with its own accord through the function of specialized organs, tissues and cells. This process is "intimately related to the life of affect, emotion and feeling in a broad sense."[11] Moreover, the activity of sensing in itself becomes a form of sensory input as the traces of one sense, begin to interact with the impressions of another sense. Connection-forming takes place between sense impressions, the residue (traces) of prior sensory experience and the proprioceptive or anticipatory preparation for further (continuing) sense impressions.[12] "These will interact with one another, and with new incoming stimuli as if all were in terms of fresh sensory stimulation . . . ."[13] Thus the sensuous aspect of man is a complex network of interrelated impressions and activities, not as readily separated in function as in theory.

Aesthetically we have tended to direct our awareness to certain of these sensa without overtly accounting for the complexity of the sensing bodysphere, of the psychogenetic and physiologic lifespace or sphere of awareness. We would seem to have attended to the aesthetic as a theoretical rather than an actual, active process of continuous involvement.

In the visual arts, we have even tended to limit the modes of sensory input or the sources of the sensuous. These are the visual sense of sight and the tactile sense of touch.

Concerning perceiving via the tactile senses: these "are not really an instantaneous experience but require a series of changing sensations," or of movement.[14] It is by this latter involvement with movement or selection that we begin to engage in an encounter; by so encountering, that is, attending to our life-space through select stimulation of the sense of touch, we are capable of conceptualizing about the nature of sense impression being generated. No longer is the organism sending and receiving undifferentiated energy-forces. It is now attaching purpose to this process and acting upon the information which is evolving and it begins to perceive the tactile qualities of surface modulation. Forming transpires and a certain knowledge about the ongoing relationship is gained. This recognition is realized from out of the process of sensing and by virtue of the physiological movement or selection and psychomotility or the mental and neural activities envolved in determining the temporal reality of that life-space.

The perceptual image generation through touching-

feeling is, however, only vicariously similar in kind to the reality of the life-functioning[15] body-sphere. This reality can be or is augmented by the sensory phenomena of sight. According to Hans Jonas, sight furnishes "the analogues for the intellectual upper-structure" as well as for a model of perception in general and as a "measure of the other senses."[16] Sight alone, unlike the other senses, allows for these characteristics of the sensory-conceptual-perceptual process. These are simultaneity, neutralization and distance.

Simultaneity is the ability to affect multiple impressions within the time dimensions of a single moment without having to collect the data successively. Therefore, "it introduces the beholder to a whole time-dimension otherwise not disclosed to him, namely, the present as something more than point-experience of the passing now."[17] It is an impression within the space-time continuum, a dimension wherein things are beheld at once and are related to one another by scanning.

> This scanning, though proceeding <u>in</u> time, articulates only what was present to the first glance and what stays unchanged while being scanned. The time thus taken in taking-in the view is not experienced as the passing away of contents before new ones in the flux of event, but as a lasting of

> the same, an identity which is the extension of the instantaneous now and therefore unmoved, continued present--so long as no change occurs in the objects themselves. When it does then time starts rolling visually.[18]

Neutrality is the absence of the "dynamical situation." The dynamical situation is the movement in time necessitated by the sequential nature of perceiving with the sense of touch. Neutrality is also the absence of the intrusion of causality: "I have to do nothing but look and the object is not affected by that."[19] As a concept of objectivity this allows for distinction between the "thing as it is in itself" and the "thing as it affects me."

This kind of neutrality, which is not as readily accessable, if accessable at all, through the other basic senses, allows for the distinction of the other-object from the self-as-object, and the inner-self. What transpires is an awareness of the self as it is manifest in the bodysphere and the life-space; as it is realized relative to a self-concept, a self-image as a physical entity within the bodysphere and as it attends to and is affected by objects other-than-the self which are a part of life-space. This latter contention is, in effect, distancing. It places the perceived thing within a proximity to the sensing

organism in such ways as to describe boundaries. The distinction between great distance and close proximity is likened to anticipation and confrontation. The former being more neutral, the latter more dynamic.[20]

Given this kind of sensation and conceptualizing, one is able to synthesize a perception which has a self-referent.[21] The aesthetic, therefore, becomes the media of art, or more accurately, mediation for that which is perceived and articulated after-the-fact as being art.

If the taxonomy delineated previously is acceptable as accounting for the sensuous, it then seems to follow that in limiting art experiencing to visual experiencing (and the appended tactile experiencing) regardless of how encompassing these sensa are in terms of the assumed Gestalt, that a significant dimension of the aesthetic has been neglected. Precisely because only a portion of the self has been engaged in perceiving and has in turn been perceived. Stated otherwise, our traditional art-aesthetic, even in phenomenological terms, is not completely open to the total reality of the human dimension. And without this openness, wherein lies the capacity for judging that to be art which we call art?

Art has never been an attempt to grasp

> reality as a whole--that is beyond our human capacity; it was never even an attempt to represent the totality of appearances; but rather it has been the piecemeal recognition and patient fixation of what is significant in human experience.[22]

We are beginning to understand that "what is significant in human experience" is the sensory network and the related capacity for perceiving: the "awareness of consciousness" and the "recognition of the process of perception."[23]

Our perception of the arts in the past has been one of permanence: of recognition and fixation. John McHale, in "The Plastic Parthenon" contends that the "traditional canons of . . . artistic judgment . . . tend to place a high value on permanence, uniqueness and the enduring universal value of chosen artifacts."[24] This is no longer relevant to our current, transient and changing life-space. Thus to perpetuate the existing aesthetic mode in education is to capitulate with the past. But, more importantly, perhaps, it is to deny the adaptation of life-functioning within this "new" transient state.

Historically, art appears to have been looked at as creating reality by objectifying forces and energies in space and time. This issue has been discussed in

the foregoing sections and the reality of the arts in this sense has been challenged. The challenge is couched in the realization that as human beings, perhaps man has never perceived reality at all. If man has not perceived reality, it is because he has not been able to perceive himself. In order to perceive the self, man must inevitably enter a symbiotic state with his life-space. It can no longer afford to be a one-dimensional, passive confinement.

The symbiosis will allow for all the dimensions of the life-space: the bodysphere, the biosphere and the noosphere. The noosphere is technology as a tool --the hardware and software, the systems and the information--which is pervasive to our life-space. Teilhard de Chardin has called this "the film of organized intelligence that encircles the planet . . . ." [25]

> World communications...diffuse and and interpenetrate local cultural tradition, providing commonly-shared cultural experience...transmit(ting) man's symbolic needs and their expression on a world scale. [26]

There is an eminent danger that comes with the "new" reality: becoming trapped by the inability to perceive our own reality. Social critics such as Paul Goodman and Theodore Roszak have termed this increasingly visible danger "technocracy."

It is necessary to establish a distinction

between technology and the critically descriptive term, technocracy. Technology, as it is used here, is a tool. A tool, which in the affirmative sense, serves the needs and comforts of an individual and a scoiety. As such, one is capable of using this tool but still retains the capacity of functioning as an individual. It enhances his reality.

Technocracy is a condition of the technological culture. It is the resultant closed system which has occurred with the advancing of technology beyond its original commitment to fulfill existing needs. The resulting condition, therefore, has been to create needs to fit the existing technology at the expense of coping with or even understanding, current and foreseeable needs. The environmental crisis exemplifies this condition. Technocracy is, by this definition, a closed and self-perpetuating system inventing rationales for its own perpetuation.

Closing down of the system, whether it is the human system (the bodysphere) or the intelligent systems (noosphere) is the result of inadequate information. On the part of the organism, it is the inability to perceive his reality. This closure can be traced back to the primal flux of those energies and forces which originate with the sensuous aspects

of human experiencing and the process which manifest themselves in the perception of the bodysphere and the life-space. The lack of information which causes closure is entropy and "it measures the lack of information about the structure of a system."[27]

> Information is a name for the content of what is exchanged with the outer-world [life-space] as we adjust to it and make our adjustments [life-functioning] felt upon it.[28]

Information about the structure of a system refers to knowing the human condition. This is the "subject of aesthetic activity."[29] It is symbiotic since it requires sharing or feedback. Feedback does not exist within or between closed systems: human or intelligent. It exists in openness and is "contingent upon other systems."[30] Exchanging of information or the interaction of affectation is energy transceiving.

In the information processing culture, the emphasis on the aesthetic will not be on the objectification of reality in some tangible, permanent form. The aesthetic will be the knowing, interactionary relationship between ourselves and our cybernetic environment. Our cultural awareness will be that of the space-time continuum.

We will, as John McHale points out, treat our

art environments as "lived experiences."— There will be a "sensuous appropriation of the world." (Karl Marx) Marcuse calls this the "living art." The aesthetic is conceived "not as the specific property of certain objects (the objet d'art) but as forms and modes of existence . . . ."[31] Art will become problem solving in "unique and particularly elegant ways." And, it will eminate from the way in which things are done. The function of the artist and his activity will become (and is already becoming) one of imposing "artistic" knowing on the resource of raw information and energy, tranforming the energy-information into the humanistic value structures of the intelligent systems.[32]

The question initially asked was whether ot not art in education, particularly aesthetic education, was "in-tune" with the evolving arts and our changing culture. Based upon the historical tendency to limit the nature of the aesthetic; based upon the object-ification of reality as being external to the life-space; based upon the status of our evolving cybernetic culture; than the answer to that question would have to be no. In fact, neither art education nor education itself are in-tune with the now and furthermore, they

exhibit little inclination toward future orientation:[33] "our schools face backward toward a dying system, rather than forward to the emerging new society."[34]

In order to turn education forward there is a need for new organizational goals: "dispersal, decentralization, interpenetration with the community, ad-hocratic administration, a break-up of the rigid scheduling and grouping."[35] The curriculum is also challenged. It is proposed that students may better benefit from studying probability, logic, computers and cybernetics, philosophy, mass communication and aesthetics.[36] As a beginning there is now an emerging emphasis on the "open classroom," which offers the potential for sharing, feedback and humanness. To this it is suggest that we enrich the possibility for courses of study with the essentials for understanding the noosphere: information exchange, the intermedia network and the new-aesthetic.

Perhaps the new-aesthetic (ways of knowing) can have a beginning in what is now called aesthetic education. It is proposed, therefore, that the new or real-aesthetics be pursued as the humanistic ways of knowing, wherein the multiplicity of aesthetic modes are viewed as parts of the whole of the human phenomenon. As such it is synaesthetic and attends

to the omni-operative, multi-dimensional aspects of information exchange and energy transceiving. Synaesthesia is the activity of coming to the self's real-actualization and knowing of the future-culture, as well as an awareness of existence within the space-time continuum.

It would be difficult, at this time, to predict the many and changing parts and relationships of the synaesthetic. Suffice it to say that it embodies the ways of knowing and that these ways of knowing, taken separately, do not predict what is wholly capable of being known. In this respect it is synergetic. ("Synergy is the behavior of whole systems unpredicted by the separately observed behaviors of any of the system's separate parts or any subassemblies of the systems's parts."[37]) This is the third domain--a synthesis in knowing, necessary for adapting to the future-phenomenon.

The most important part about tomorrow is not the technology or the automation, but that man is going to come into entirely new relationships with his fellow men. He will retain much more of his everyday life of what we term the naivete and idealism of the child. I think the way to see what tomorrow is going to look like is just to look at our children.

R. Buckminster Fuller

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REFERENCES

[1]It is only necessary to glance at the literature in the arts to recognize the rationale for this particular point of view.

[2]Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten, Aesthetica, ca. 1750.

[3]Immanuel Kant, Critique of Judgment, 1789-93.

[4]Gustav Theodore Fechner, Vorschule der Aesthetik, 1876.

[5]It should be noted, that the three examples chosen for illustration are not the definitive sources for an examination of the historical aesthetic. They were rather arbitrarily selected because of their related yet differing attitudes toward experiencing art.

[6, 7, 9]Clark Moustakas, Creativity and Conformity (Princeton, New Jersey: D. Van Nostrand Company, Inc., 1967), pp. v, vi.

[8]Gardner Murphy and Herbert Spohn, Encounter with Reality (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1968), p. 7.

[10]The taxonomy is derived for the most part from Albert Tsugawa's article "The Nature of the Aesthetic and Human Values," Art Education, November 1968, p. 12. The content of the taxonomy can also be examined with greater detail in Murphy and Spohn, Encounter with Reality.

[11]Murphy and Spohn, pp. 21-25.

[12]This idea was first ventured by David Hartley in 1749 in Observations on Man, His Frame, His Duty, His Expectations. It has more recently been corroborated by Kenneth Spence in "Theoretical Interpretations of Learning," Handbook on Experimental Psychology (New York: Wiley, 1951).

[13]Murphy and Spohn, p. 31.

[14]Hans Jonas, "The Nobility of Sight: A Study in the Phenomenology of the Senses," The Philosophy of the Body, ed. Stuart F. Spricker (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1970), p. 319.

[15]Life functioning: I prefer the term life-functioning / life-function rather than the term life-world (Lebenswelt). The latter seems to convey a rather passive, though anticipatory state of being; whereas the life-function seems to more adequately indicate the activity of existence.

16, 17, 18, 19, [20]Hans Jonas, pp. 312-13, 320, 321, 323-28.

[21]Murphy and Spohn, pp. 95-6.

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[23]Gene Youngblood, Expanded Cinema (New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., Inc., 1970), p. 76.

[24]John McHale, "The Plastic Parthenon," Dotzero, Spring 1967.

[25]Youngblood, p. 57.

[26]McHale.

[27]Youngblood, p. 62.

[28]Norbert Wiener, The Human Use of Human Beings (New York: Avon Books, 1967), pp. 26-7.

29, [30]Youngblood, pp. 63, 63.

[31]Herbert Marcuse, "Art as Form of Reality," On the Future of Art (New York: The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum and the Viking Press, 1970), p. 133.

[32]Jack Burnham, "The Aesthetics of Intelligent Systems," On the Future of Art, pp. 85-100, 121. See also Jack Burnham, Beyond Modern Sculpture (New York: George Braziller, 1968), chapters 5-8.

[33]See Alvin Toffler, Future Shock (New York: Random House, 1970), chapters 17-18. George Leonard, Education and Ecstacy (New York: Delta Books, 1968).

[34, 35, 36]Toffler, pp. 354, 363

[37]R. Buckminster Fuller, Operating Manual for Spaceship Earth (Carbobdale, Illinois: Southern Illinois University Press, 1969), p. 72.